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Abstract Only – Work in Progress

“Hermeneutical Aspects of the Qur’anic Narrative:
The Function of Coherence and Style”

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Hermeneutical aspects of the Qur’anic narrative are crucial in studying *tafsir* literature. Also, the issue of examining the relationship between the literary level of the Qur’anic narrative in its cultural context, and the nature of the Arabic language in its medieval concepts has become one of the most discussed subjects in the modern academic world. The majority of Muslim scholars believe that the importance of history and literary study are equal, but literary treatment has priority. Therefore, the Qur’anic text cannot be truly interpreted until it has been read in light of its exact literary structure. Furthermore, the importance of studying the function of coherence and style in the hermeneutics of the Qur’an has been claimed by some modern scholars of the Qur’an. The first part of this paper will highlight the basic issues of *I’jaz al-Qur’an* that relate the Qur’anic narrative to the subject of *nazm al-Qur’an*. It will demonstrate why the medieval commentators did not treat this subject as deeply as they did the lexical and grammatical ones. It highlights the reasons why they linked this topic by undertaking linguistic studies of the Qur’anic text’s literary aspects, as it helped demonstrate its inimitability. It was the Qur’an’s literary eloquence, rhetorical excellence (*bal ghah*) and lucid expression (*bay n*) which eventually became the long-standing academic discipline known as *I’jaz al-Qur’an*. It was this *ijaz* that ultimately challenged humankind’s intellectual abilities throughout the ages. They approached the Qur’anic text only to resolve its linguistic ambiguity. For this purpose, they simply chose the Qur’anic words and verses and tried to explain them in light of their understanding of the Arabic language and literature. The second part will study the claim of some modern scholars, such as Imam Hamid al-Din Farah , and Imam Amin Ahsan Islah , whose works have fully proven that the functions of coherence and style in the Qur’anic narrative are all well-known and conventionally understood by the Arabs. Accordingly, they have admitted that the Qur’an comes to possess a unity that would justify its finished form as the starting point of a literary investigation. In this sense, they assumed that since the Qur’an possess significant coherence, it must be viewed differently from classical exegesis, and should be treated as such. At this level, the theory of *nazm al-Qur’an* could be applied to the Qur’an. Scholars are interested in the fact that all the verses of a narrative are so well-connected to one another that the narrative appears as a

magnificently organized, coherent cogent speech of God. This paper also examines the coherence (*nazm*) between words and verses of the *surah* in which they appear. This is claimed to be a revolutionary methodology of *tafsir* of the Qur'an.